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ABSTRACT

With the ever growing interest that libraries have in the Internet, the potentials of other computer resources may be overlooked or under-utilized. One such resource is the campus local area network (LAN). For libraries, a campus LAN presents possibilities ranging from simple library promotion to networked databases. The Internet provides unlimited but sometimes unreliable resources; a local area network can provide controlled, relatively reliable and custom-tailored resources and services for a campus. New Mexico State University-Alamogordo Library attempts to make use of the campus LAN to enhance and expand upon traditional resources offered to users, and also to provide new and unique library services. This paper describes how the library makes use of the campus LAN in library instruction, library services, automation supplement, database access, and library promotion. Reproductions of computer screens are included which depict and list resources available on the Library Noticeboard. (Author/SWC)

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LOCAL AREA NETWORK:
What Can a Library Do With It?

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INTRODUCTION

With the ever growing interest that libraries have in the Internet, the potentials of other computer resources may be overlooked or under-utilized. One such resource is the campus local area network. For libraries, a campus LAN presents possibilities ranging from simple library promotion to networked databases. And while the Internet certainly provides unlimited, although sometimes unreliable resources, a local area network can provide controlled, relatively reliable and custom-tailored resources and services for a campus.

GOALS OF THE NETWORK FOR THE LIBRARY

In his book Library LANs, Breeding states that "the main purpose of a LAN involves sharing computer resources and facilitating communication among computer users" (Breeding, 1992). This definition of a LAN falls right in line with what libraries attempt to accomplish - that is sharing all types of resources with library users and establishing contact with patrons through service, instruction, etc. Campus LANs provide an excellent vehicle in which to deliver and provide library services and resources.

Whenever possible, NMSU-Alamogordo Library attempts to make use of the campus LAN to enhance and expand upon the traditional services and resources that we offer to our campus users. We also attempt to provide new and unique library services that are made possible due to the availability of the campus LAN. In reviewing the ways that the library makes use of the LAN, several general areas of use become apparent: Library Instruction, Library Services, Automation Supplement, Database Access and Library Promotion. This paper will discuss NMSU-Alamogordo Townsend Library's use of a campus local area network in these general areas.

THE LIBRARY

New Mexico State University-Alamogordo is a branch campus offering associate degrees and certifications to 2000 full and part time students. NMSU-A's Townsend Library has a collection of over 35,000 volumes, 400 periodical subscriptions, and several thousand audio-visual titles. The library staff includes two full time librarians, three full time and two part time library staff members, and five work-study students. We are currently in the process of reclassification, and retrospective conversion in preparation for becoming automated within the next year.

Our primary goal, like that of most two year college libraries, is to support the college curriculum, as well as the faculty, staff and students, with our collection and library services. Since NMSU-Alamogordo campus is networked, the library takes opportunities to incorporate the use of the campus network in working towards this goal.

THE CAMPUS LAN

Townsend Library at New Mexico State University-Alamogordo, with the assistance of the campus computer center, provides eight public access

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Internet terminals which also serve as access points to the local area network. The library sees the Internet and the local area network as complimenting each other in the resources and services that they each provide to library users.

NMSU-Alamogordo has a Novell local area network on its campus. The local area network is connected to a wide area network (WAN) located in Las Cruces. The WAN then connects to the Internet, allowing any NMSU-Alamogordo computer connected to the campus network access to the Internet as well as the local area network.

The campus system administrators have loaded an electronic mail program called Pegasus Mail or Pmail to the local area network. In addition to allowing the delivery of electronic mail to individuals or groups, Pmail provides a function called Noticeboard. Noticeboards, which can be created for any area of interest, act as public boards for posting messages to the entire network. As faculty, staff and students logon to the local area network, they are electronically notified of any unread messages on all of the Noticeboards.

The Noticeboard option makes the local network an excellent vehicle for distributing information to a variety of campus users. Upon considering the electronic resources available, one librarian suggests that

> newsletters, current awareness services, and selective dissemination of information are typical outreach services...with the recent growth of electronic formats, wide availability of microcomputers, and attendant ease of use, it is wise to consider, or reconsider, the application of these services (Elder, 1994).

In order to reach as many campus members as possible with library-related information, the NMSU-A Library had a Library Noticeboard created. Messages put on to the Library Noticeboard can be removed and edited only by a campus systems administrator or the library administrator in charge of the Noticeboard. Many of the services and resources discussed in this paper take place on the Library Noticeboard.

The local area campus network has the potential of reaching a large portion of the campus. Staff and faculty receive a campus account for free when they begin working at NMSU-Alamogordo. Students must pay a $10.00 computer use fee, or be registered in a computer class (which charges an additional $10.00 in the tuition), in order to receive a campus account. The campus account provides unlimited access to the local area network as well as to the Internet.

AREAS OF LAN USE

The library's use of the campus local area network takes many forms, but can generally be divided into the tracts of: Instruction, Library Service, Automation Supplement, Database Access and Library Promotion. The multiplicity of the LAN's use is clearly demonstrated by the various library resources and services found on the network.

INSTRUCTION

In discussing electronic resources available to library users, one library suggests that "to exploit these information resources, electronic instruction could be made available over the network....innovative approaches need to be developed for such instruction" (McClure, Moen, & Ryan, 1994). NMSU-Alamogordo Townsend Library has utilized the campus network as a place to provide electronic instruction. Most of this library instruction comes in the form of instructional sheets posted to the network on the Library Noticeboard. The instructional sheets are available on the network until we remove or update them, so campus users can refer to them at any time, as needed.

Since the campus networked computers (in the library as well as around the campus) can typically access the Internet as well as the LAN, the network seemed to be an appropriate place to provide instruction about the Internet. The library has developed a series of Internet instructional sheets covering the topics of Telnet, Listserv, Gopher, FTP, WWW, and Netscape. These sheets are available in print and are also readily available on the network.

Included in the electronic instruction available on the NMSU-Alamogordo network are various bibliographies produced by the library. These bibliographies include traditional library resources, as well as a few "bibliographies" of Internet resources available on specific subjects. In addition to Internet instructional sheets and bibliographies, the library also provides instruction on basic library use. Examples of this basic instruction include sheets on "Finding a Book at Townsend Library," and "Finding an Article at Townsend Library." Another benefit of posting this electronic instruction on the network is that as new faculty, staff and students come to NMSU-Alamogordo campus, these instructional resources will be available for them, so ideally we "instruct" most new campus users.

LIBRARY SERVICES

In one study on library networking, it was explained that "the librarians thought that it was essential to provide traditional services in the networked environment" (McClure, Moen, & Ryan, 1994). Working along this same line, NMSU-Alamogordo library established it's own email address (LIBINFO@nmsua.nmsu.edu) to "electronically provide" traditional services. The LIBINFO address can be used by faculty, staff or students needing any library-related information. Although it is in its early stages, we hope that LIBINFO will be used to address any type of library information.

Since the NMSU-Alamogordo campus is relatively small, we anticipate being able to accept such things as Interlibrary Loan requests through LIBINFO. We can assume that in order to send an ILL request, the person will need to have their own pmail address, thereby allowing easy communication between the patron and the library if additional bibliographic information is needed. Additionally, it seems reasonable to assume that we could accept campus document delivery requests by faculty/staff through LIBINFO since we have campus mail delivery several times a day. The document delivery service would compliment a "Current Contents" service already offered to

faculty/staff in which we send the contents page of requested periodicals. We base the introduction of these electronic library services on the premise that innovative mediums, such as the electronic network, can enhance and improve the provision of traditional library services.

AUTOMATION SUPPLEMENT

The Townsend Library at NMSU-Alamogordo has been in the preparation stage of automation for many years, and in the upcoming year we plan to join the automation system of NMSU Main Campus. Until that point, however, we attempt to provide as much information as possible about the library's collection to the campus, through the local network. Like an online catalog, the collection information remains available on the network at any time, and can be edited or revised by library staff as the need arises. The information that we are able to provide on the campus network certainly can't replace an online catalog, but it can provide useful information about the collection, and in this way serve as an automation supplement until the online catalog is in place.

Examples of collection information that we provide on the network Library Noticeboard include a List of Feature Films, a List of Informational Videos, and List of Current Newspapers available in the library. A Current List of Periodicals has provided expressed appreciation by various faculty and staff who are quickly able to determine if the library holds a particular periodical.

Finally, as we receive and process new books, we utilize the efforts of a library volunteer to type a list of new books received in the library. Once this list of books with appropriate call numbers is compiled, it is loaded into the Library's Noticeboard. In this way, we provide an electronic "New Book Shelf" to the library patrons around campus. Although finding this type of collection information is a simple task if an online catalog is available, there is little opportunity to provide this information without an online catalog, so the LAN proves to be a very valuable option.

DATABASE ACCESS

The campus local area network is, of course, an excellent location in which to provide access to electronic databases. One librarian explains that "access to network resources can be accomplished either by bringing the resources to the library or 'taking' the users to the resources" (McClure, Moen, & Ryan, 1994). At Townsend Library, we attempt to "bring" resources to the library/campus *and* "take" users to resources available elsewhere.

The Computer Center and the Library joined together to purchase a CD-rom tower for the campus network. The library can provide CD-roms on 4 of the 7 drives available on the tower. A periodical index called **Academic Abstracts** was the first CD-rom that we installed on the network. Academic Abstracts is the primary periodical index used by our students in the library. By putting Academic Abstracts on the network, we provided 8 terminals capable of accessing the database in the library - this is 6 more computers with access than before the network tower was installed. In addition to the increase in Academic Abstract computers in the library, campus-networked computers outside of the

library can now also access Academic Abstracts. Staff, faculty and students can easily connect to Academic Abstracts and do library research from their office or in one of the campus computer labs due to the CD-rom being available on the campus LAN CD-rom tower. In this way, we are "bringing" resources to the library and campus. (We are conducting ongoing research to determine which additional CD-rom products will best provide for the needs of our students, faculty and staff.)

Projects to "take" the user to other resources include a subscription to the **FirstSearch** databases, with access through the Internet. NMSU-Alamogordo is a member of the recently created NMCAL/LEIAN FirstSearch consortium that provides access to a variety of FirstSearch databases. In order to make these databases easily available to users, we are working with the systems administrator to have an automatic connection and logon to Firstsearch. By simply logging on to the campus LAN through a computer anywhere on the campus, users will be able to type a command and automatically connect, through the Internet, to a variety of databases available on FirstSearch. Again, the local area network provides the capability of searching from anywhere on campus - not just in the library. In a LAN, libraries have the perfect vehicle for delivering database access to an entire campus.

LIBRARY PROMOTION

The final area of LAN use for libraries to consider is perhaps the most detailed-oriented yet general in nature - library promotion. Library promotion can happen on many levels. There is the practical and detailed promotion of things like library hours and policies as well as the more generalized promotion of the library as a place that has something for everyone. The benefits of library promotion by computer include the fact that it "can reach a large number of users...can be constantly available to the user...can be used anywhere...alterations and updating can be easy" (Malley, 1985).

NMSU-Alamogordo uses the Library Noticeboard on the network to update users on routine information such as Library Hours, Library Events and Workshops. The network at NMSU-A is also used to promote more general aspects of the library, such as the collection (special books, etc.), special services, and resources. Posting this type of information on the local area network is especially helpful as it does reach a "large number of users" and messages can be easily removed or edited by library staff when needed. It is realized, however, that "one might argue that many of these announcements are already made in libraries without computer facilities...it is accessibility from outside the library that gives the computer the edge" (Malley, 1985). "In-house" promotion reaches only those who happen to come into the library, whereas computers reach out beyond the library building.

Perhaps the most universal of all aspects of library promotion, however, is overall library visibility. When campus users log on to the network and see a message from the library, even if the information is not relevant to them at the time, it reminds them that the library actively exists and is available to them. The library information on the campus network reaches "a wide range of people

beyond the library, and not just those who come into the library. This is an essential part of promotion, i.e. getting to non-users" (Malley, 1985). By making the library a visible entity on the campus network, we are hopefully reaching not only regular users of the library, but non-users as well.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

There are several issues to consider when discussing library use of the campus local area network. This paper describes what ideally could happen with the use of a network. Of course, individuals, for various reasons may not be reached through the network. We've seen many faculty, for example, who have a computer account, but never use it to even check their email. There are also those individuals who have an account, but don't have convenient access to a computer.

Finally, the library can't force anyone to read the messages posted to the network and unfortunately there are many who fall into this category of non-readers. Through NMSU-Alamogordo's Pmail system, there is even the option of turning off the system that notifies network users of new messages on the Noticeboards. Clearly, the library can only reach those campus users who have a need or interest in the information that we can provide. But, we feel that the benefits of having library information like this on the network outweigh the negatives. Most of the information provided on the network can be found in some print form in the library for those who are missed off the network.

Clearly, a campus local area network is a very useful resource to a library, providing unique enhancements to traditional services and resources. By utilizing the potentials available through a campus LAN, a library can have the opportunity to promote and provide services, present instructional material, and disseminate information through networked databases - to name just a few possibilities. This papers describes some efforts made by NMSU-Alamogordo Townsend Library, but we hope to make even more use of this valuable resource in the future. A library making the most of a campus local area network provides benefits not only for the library and its users, but for the entire campus.

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    12  General Bulletin Board
     6  Jobs through the Career Center
    11  What's Happening at NMSU-A
     1  Information from the Library
     2  Information From Student Services
     6  Faculty & Staff Discussions
     4  Financial Aid / Scholarships
    35  Clean Jokes Only Please
    10  Safety and Security
    10  Lost and Found
    10  Announcements from Phi Theta Kappa
Use pmail's noticeboard feature to read.

Strike any key when ready . . .
```

Example of the message notification on the Noticeboards.

```
From:          "MELINDA BAKO DERMODY" <NMSU-A/MDERMODY>
Organization:  Alamogordo Branch Community College
Date:          Wed, 8 Mar 1995 10:39:37 MDT
Subject:       Newspaper Holdings List
Priority:      normal

                    NEWSPAPER HOLDINGS


Alamogordo Daily News          1 month plus current month

Albuquerque Journal            1 month plus current month

El Paso Times                  1 month plus current month

Indian Today                   Current month

New York Times (Sunday Ed.)    1 month plus current month
                               Jan. 1970-present on microfilm

USA Today                      1  month plus current month
```

Example of Library Noticeboard message.

Noticeboard: Library [redacted] Administrator

From/Topic	Subject/Long Name	Date
..	<Back to previous level>	
« MELINDA BAKO DERMODY	Citing Electronic Resources	11 Oct 95 15:39
« MELINDA BAKO DERMODY	Fall Library Hours	22 Aug 95 13:29
« MELINDA BAKO DERMODY	What is Netscape?	18 Jul 95 11:27
« MELINDA BAKO DERMODY	What is World Wide Web (WWW) ?	13 Jul 95 13:05
« MELINDA BAKO DERMODY	New Titles	14 Jun 95 9:40
« MELINDA BAKO DERMODY	Internet Resources - Higher Ed	17 Mar 95 8:23
« MELINDA BAKO DERMODY	Internet Sheets	14 Mar 95 10:28
« MELINDA BAKO DERMODY	What is LISTSERV?	8 Mar 95 10:52
« MELINDA BAKO DERMODY	What is FTP?	8 Mar 95 10:48
« MELINDA BAKO DERMODY	What is GOPHER?	8 Mar 95 10:45
« MELINDA BAKO DERMODY	Newspaper Holdings List	8 Mar 95 10:39
« MELINDA BAKO DERMODY	What is TELNET?	8 Mar 95 10:32
« MELINDA BAKO DERMODY	Periodical Holdings List	8 Mar 95 10:16
« MELINDA BAKO DERMODY	What is the Internet	8 Mar 95 9:20
« MELINDA BAKO DERMODY	Resources for the Internet	8 Mar 95 8:44
« MELINDA BAKO DERMODY	Acad. Abstracts Magazine Index	21 Feb 95 8:36
« MELINDA BAKO DERMODY	Feature Films Available at Lib	23 Sep 94 8:54

17 notices, 0 unread

Attachments Followup Locate Mail New Print Reply sorT eXtract
Spc/F5 (un)mark Del Delete Ins New topic Enter Read/select Esc Exit

List of resources available on the Library Noticeboard.